

Remarks at the Emergency Operations Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana September 5, 2005

First of all, thanks for doing your duty. You've faced one of the greatest challenges our country has ever faced. As a result of your compassion and your hard work and your dedication, a lot of people's lives were saved, and I want to thank you for that. I hope that makes you feel good, to know that you helped save life.

We've got a lot of work to do. I told the Governor and the Senators and the Congress people, I said, "You know, if it's not right, we're going to fix it, and if it is right, we're going to keep doing it." And this is just the beginning of a huge effort to—and we're going to continue to save life. But you've got to know that lives are still being saved as we speak because thousands of people are taking in these displaced souls, in their homes and churches

and synagogues and mosques and providing love and compassion and food.

This is one of these disasters that will test our soul and test our spirit. And—but we're going to show the world, once again, that not only we will survive, but that we will be stronger and better for it when it's all said and done, that amidst this darkness, there is light. And I want to thank you all for providing light, immediate light to people who needed help. You make your State and your local governments and your country proud.

God bless you and your families. May God bless the victims, and may God continue to bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana.

Remarks to the Community in Poplarville, Mississippi September 5, 2005

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

—out of this despair is going to come a vibrant coast. It's—again, I understand if you're saying to yourself, "Well, it's hard for me to realize what George W. is saying, because I've seen the rubble and I know what has happened to my neighbors." But I'd like to come back down here in about 2 years and walk your streets and see how vital this part of the world is going to be.

I can't wait to join you in the joy of welcoming neighbors back into neighborhoods, and small businesses up and running, and cutting those ribbons that somebody is creating new jobs. That's what I think is going to happen.

I just want you to know that when I'm thinking about how we can help this part of the world, Mississippi is on my mind. Mississippi is a part of the future of this country, and part of that future is to help you get back up on your feet. And I'm confident that your United States Senator Trent Lott, if I don't say it loud enough, he will. [*Laughter*] He'll remind us. But I appreciate you taking time out of your day.

And by the way, I'm traveling with good company. My wife, Laura, is with me too.

Let me conclude by asking for God's blessings on you all and your families and friends, and let you know we're here for the long term. I understand. I understand the damage. I understand the devastation.